Statement
HON. BART GORDON (TN-06)

Introduction of

"Sowing the Seeds Through Science and Engineering Research Act"

Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to complement two previously introduced bills, H.R. 4434 and H.R. 4435, to authorize additional recommendations from a committee of the National Academy of Sciences, chaired by Mr. Norman Augustine. The recommendations of the committee's report, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future,* reflect the consensus forged among nationally-recognized industry, academic and government experts.

With this bill, Sowing the Seeds Through Science and Engineering Research Act, and the previously introduced bills, I have taken steps to implement the Augustine Committee's highest priority, which is to improve K-12 math and science education by enhancing the skills and qualifications of math and science teachers, and to respond to the committee's call to "sustain and strengthen the nation's traditional commitment to the long-term basic research that has the potential to be transformational to maintain the flow of new ideas that fuel the economy, provide security, and enhance the quality of life."

The bill I introduced today authorizes 10% increases per year in funding for basic research in the physical sciences, mathematical sciences, and engineering at the principal Federal agencies supporting such research. These increases, if sustained, would lead to a doubling of basic research funding in these critical areas over 7 years.

The bill also takes action to develop the research talent needed for the future by providing for up to 200 new awards per year, of $100,000 per year for 5 years, to outstanding early-career researchers. It seeks to enlarge the pool of graduate students in science, math and engineering by creating a graduate fellowship program, with 5000 new fellowships per year for individuals pursuing studies in areas of national need.

Finally, the bill establishes a presidential innovation award to stimulate scientific and engineering advances in the national interest and provides for the refurbishment of academic and government research laboratories, an essential factor to enable leading-edge research.

These three bills are a response to a serious challenge to our Nation's future economic prosperity. From the Augustine report: "This Nation must prepare with great urgency to preserve its strategic and economic security. Because other Nations have, and probably will continue to have, the competitive advantage of a low-wage structure, the United States must compete by optimizing its knowledge-based resources, particularly in science and technology, and by sustaining the most fertile environment for new and revitalized industries and the well-paying jobs they bring. We have already seen that capital, factories, and laboratories readily move wherever they are thought to have the greatest return."

My intent in introducing these bills is to issue a call for action by the Congress and the Administration. The Augustine Report correctly identifies the challenges we face as a Nation and has developed a series of specific recommendations to address these challenges. The conclusions and recommendations in this report are not new. The problem is that neither the Administration nor Congress has made any real efforts to act.

I hope the introduction of this legislation will begin a substantive discussion on the commitment and resources required to ensure our Nation's future economic competitiveness and that our children have well-paid, challenging jobs. I am committed to working with the private sector, Members of Congress and the Administration in turning this legislation into funded programs.